

Message Text

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15

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

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FM AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5109

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL BELFAST

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PBOR, EI

SUBJ: PROVOS HINT AT VIOLENCE OVER EXTRADITION ISSUE

SUMMARY: TOP-RANKING PROVO IRA OFFICER, SPEAKING AT SINK FEIN CONVENTION IN DUBLIN, HINTED STRONGLY AT VIOLENCE IN REPUBLIC IF REPUBLICANS ARE EXTRADITED TO NORTH. EXTRADITION WAS ALREADY SHAPING UP AS SERIOUS ISSUE, AND THIS HIGHLIGHTS PROBLEM. END SUMMARY.

1. PROVISIONAL SINK FEIN HELD ITS ANNUAL CONVENTION (ARD-FHEIS) IN DUBLIN OCT 21. SPEAKER ATTRACTING MOST INTEREST WAS DAITHI O'CONNELL, WHO IS WIDELY KNOWN AS RANKING IRA OFFICER. HE ARRIVED DISGUISED, AND HIS DEPARTURE WAS COVERED BY ADJOURNMENT OF CONVENTION, SO THAT CROWD OF OTHER DELEGATES COULD CONCEAL HIM. NOT CLEAR WHETHER POLICE INTENDED TO ARREST HIM. IN THE EVENT, THEY COULD NOT HAVE DONE SO WITHOUT MAJOR STRUGGLE, AND THERE IS AMPLE PRECEDENT FOR AVOIDING THIS KIND OF PUBLIC CONFRONTATION IN BOTH NORTH AND SOUTH OF IRELAND. AS IT WAS, CROWD LEAVING CONVENTION ATTACKED AND DAMAGED CARS OF DETECTIVES.

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2. ACCORDING TO PRESS, O'CONNELL DELIVERED STATEMENT

FROM "LEADERSHIP OF REPUBLICAN MOVEMENT," A EUPHEMISM COMMONLY USED TO COVER BOTH SINK FEIN AND IRA. HE CALLED FOR "CAMPAIGN OF STREET POLITICS" AGAINST (A) EXTRADITION OF "REPUBLICANS" TO NORTH, (B) "REPRESIVE LEGISLATION" (UNDER WHICH HUNDREDS OF IRA MEMBERS HAVE BEEN JAILED OVER PAST MONTHS), AND, (C) CONDITIONS IN JAILS. THESE ARE PROBABLY THE THREE ISSUES ON WHICH SINK FEIN RETAINS SOME REAL PUBLIC SYMPATHY.

3. ON EXTRADITION ISSUE, O'CONNELL HINTED STRINGLY THAT PROVOS MIGHT DEPART FROM THEIR STANDING POLICY OF AVOIDING VIOLENCE IN THE REPUBLIC. HE SAID: "WE WISH TO STATE EXPLICITLY TO THE DUBLIN POLITICIANS THAT THE REPUBLICAN POLICY OF NON-MILITARY ACTION IN THE SOUTH DOES NOT GUARANTEE THEM IMMUNITY FROM THE LOGICAL CONSEQUENCES OF HANDING OVER ANY IRISH REPUBLICAN TO THE FORCES OF THE BRITISH CROWN." THIS IS GENERALLY READ HERE AS UNMISTAKABLE WARNING.

4. OTHER ELEMENTS OF SPEECH WERE NOT SURPRISING. SDLP WAS ACCUSED OF BEING COMPOSED OF "BRITISH PUPPETS." MAIN OBJECTIVE OF PROVOS WAS AGAIN DESCRIBED AS FORCING BRITISH TO LEAVE IRELAND.

5. PRESS REPORTS ELECTION OF FOLLOWING SINK FEIN OFFICERS. MANY ARE WELL KNOWN, AND THERE IS NO EVIDENT CHANGE AT TOP.

PRESIDENT: RUAIRO BRAADAIGH (ROSCOMMON)
VICE PRESIDENTS: MAIRE DRUMM (BELFAST) AND DAITHI O'CONNELL (DUBLIN)
SECRETARIES: MALACHI FOOTS (BELFAST) AND WALTER LYNCH (DUBLIN)
TREASURERS: CHARLES MCGLADE (DUBLIN) AND ANTHONY RUANE (DUBLIN)
ARD-COMHAIRLE (INNER COUNCIL): SEAN O BRAADAIGH (DUBLIN), GERRY ADAMS (BELFAST), BRENDAN MAGILL (LONDON), NIALL FAGAN (DUBLIN), MARY MCGUIGAN (BELFAST), RICHARD BEHAL (KILKENNY), BARNEY MCFADDEN (DERRY), MAIRE MOORE (BELFAST).

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6. COMMENT: EXTRADITION OF "REPUBLICANS" IS SHAPING UP AS IMPORTANT ISSUE. WE GATHER THAT GOI IS EMBARRASSED BY FAILURE OF COURTS TO EXTRADITE ANY REPUBLICAN MILITANTS, DESPITE FREQUENT REQUEST FROM NI COURTS. THERE ARE PROBLEMS OF LAW AS WELL AS PUBLIC OPINION: IRISH EXTRADITION ACT PROHIBITS EXTRADITION FOR "A POLITICAL OFFENSE OR AN OFFENSE CONNECTED WITH A POLITICAL OFFENSE." THIS COVERS ALMOST EVERYTHING

PROVOS DO, AND IN FACT THAT MUST HAVE BEEN THE INTENTION OF DRAFTERS IN THE BAD OLD DAYS. TODAY, THERE SEEMS TO BE POLITICAL WILL IN GOVT TO EXTRADITE MEN OF VIOLENCE. THERE IS CERTAINLY A POLITICAL NECESSITY. ONE POSSIBILITY MAY BE TO BYPASS PROBLEM BY ASSIGNING SECURITY ROLE TO THE NEW COUNCIL OF IRELAND, WHICH MAY BE FORMED IN FEW WEEKS. BRIAN FAULKNER HAS MADE STATEMENTS INDICATING SOME UNIONIST INTEREST IN THIS ROUTE.

7. WOULD SEEM TO US A FOLLISH MOVE FOR PROVOS TO RESORT TO VIOLENCE HERE, EVEN ON ISSUE SO EMOTIONAL AS EXTRADITION. BUT THEY HAVE USUALLY BEEN POLITICALLY FOLLISH IN RECENT YEARS, AND THEY NOW HAVE REASON TO BE DESPERATE ABOUT THEIR WEAK POSITION ON BOTH SIDES OF BORDER. GOI WILL UNDOUBTEDLY TAKE THEIR THREATS SERIOUSLY. LONG BEFORE HE WAS IN GOVT, GARRET FITZGERALD TOLD US THAT HE FEARED PROVOS WOULD EVENTUALLY RESORT TO VIOLENCE IN SOUTH. WE DOUBT THAT GOI WILL REFRAIN FROM ACTING BECAUSE OF THIS THREAT, HOWEVER. IF PROVOS SHOULD ACTUALLY EMBARK ON VIOLENCE, WE WOULD EXPECT RUTHLESS REPRESSION, WIDELY ENDORSED BY PUBLIC.

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